

## Issue 9 April 28, 2006

### Inside this Issue:

USNS Comfort Set for International Training	2
Naval Hospital Corpus Christi Corpsman to be Honored for Heroism	2
CTF 76 Medical Teams Earn "Green H" Award for 3rd Consecutive Year	3
Heroics earn Corpsman Bronze Star	4
Navy Surgeon General Visits Naval Medical Center San Diego	5
Naval Medical Center San Diego Unit Recognized by National Magazine	5

### Items of Interest:

**Nutrition Makes a Stand in Navy Fitness.** With the spring Physical Readiness Test cycle, the Navy is ensuring Sailors are aware of the fitness of healthy living and diet. The Navy has registered dietitians throughout the fleet to assist with healthy meal planning, weight loss counseling and other nutrition needs. In many cases, Sailors can also visit their command's Health Promotion Department to obtain nutritional information and assistance. The Navy has instituted a number of new programs to help Sailors achieve a culture of wellness. The ShipShape program is specifically designed to provide basic information on nutrition, physical activity, and techniques to lower and maintain an acceptable body weight. Commands interested in starting a ShipShape program can go to the Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC) site at [www-nehc.med.navy.mil/hp/shipshape/index.htm](http://www-nehc.med.navy.mil/hp/shipshape/index.htm)

# Navy and Marine Corps Medical News

*A Public Affairs Publication of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery*

## Mercy Humanitarian Mission to Begin

From U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs

**PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii** - The U.S. Naval hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) is scheduled to depart its San Diego homeport April 24, in support of a five-month humanitarian assistance mission to the Western Pacific and Southeast Asia.

Following logistics stops along the way, Mercy should arrive in the Philippines in mid to late May.

The ship's mission is being coordinated with host nations in the region and is being carried out in conjunction with non-governmental relief organizations to provide medical, dental and other humanitarian assistance programs ashore and afloat.

"The deployment of USNS Mercy



Official U.S. Navy file photo of USNS Mercy (T-A 19).

to Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific exemplifies the United States' commitment to working together with our friends, partners, and the regional community," said Adm. Gary Roughead, commander,

*(Continued on page 3)*



**SAN DIEGO** - Fleet Surgical Team Five's (FST-5) Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Tanisha M. Johnson administers a typhoid shot to a Sailor during a health awareness program held at Amphibious Group Three (AG-3). The program allows service members to become more aware of diseases and medical conditions. U.S. Navy photo by Illustrator Draftsman 2nd Class Roosevelt J. Ulloavaldivieso

## USNS Comfort Set for International Training

By Journalist 3rd Class Heather Weaver, National Naval Medical Center Public Affairs

**BETHESDA, Md.** - The crew of USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) and National Naval Medical Center staff will team up with the Canadian navy in April for a medical training mission along the East Coast.

British and Canadian military medical personnel will accompany crew members on the transit from Baltimore to Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

"The exercise with the Canadians is an international training opportunity where we will work on our interoperability with foreign nations' organic medical operations," said Chief Hospital Corpsman (AW) Richard Gotautas, Bethesda Contingency Department's leading chief petty officer.

Comfort's reduced operating crew, along with Military Sealift Command's civilian mariners and additional staff from throughout the

region, will make up the 270-person crew. Comfort will also complete a Ship Material Assessment and Readiness Testing certification during the mission.

Lt. Jon Seavey, Contingency Department's assistant department head, said the mission is essential to building a cohesive team with foreign nations. That way, in a time of crisis, interoperability will be top notch.

"This is a good exercise in enhancing our flexibility, should a real operational necessity arise," Seavey said. "Just like Mercy did in Indonesia, one of the major challenges, basically, is figuring out how our capabilities match up with their capabilities."

The Comfort will also make a port visit in Boston and Norfolk, Va.

In previous missions, Comfort assisted in relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. At its height, the hospital ship had more than 700 medical and support per-



Official U.S. Navy file photo of USNS Comfort (T-AH 20).

sonnel aboard to assist in the Federal Emergency Management Agency-led initiative to provide disaster relief to the Gulf Coast region. The ship also took part in Operation Iraqi Freedom and provided services for rescue workers after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Comfort has unique capabilities for humanitarian relief missions, including helicopter lift, advanced medical equipment, a wide range of medical skills, berthing and personnel support, as well as supplies to support medical operations ashore.

## Naval Hospital Corpus Christi Corpsman to be Honored for Heroism

By Bill W. Love, Naval Hospital Corpus Christi Public Affairs Office

**CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas** - Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class (Fleet Marine Force) Juan M. Rubio will be awarded the Silver Star Medal for conspicuous gallantry against the enemy on Jan. 1, 2005 while serving as a Marine Platoon Corpsman in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

The ceremonial presentation will be held April 27, 2006 at 9 a.m. on the upper concourse in front of the Naval Hospital aboard Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas.

The Silver Star is the U.S. Navy's third highest award for gallantry in combat following the Navy Cross, and the nation's highest award, the Medal of Honor.

Rubio's Silver Star elevates him to a distinctively exceptional category of Navy Corpsmen heroes since the commencing of Operation

Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF). Only two others have been awarded the Silver Star, none have received the Medal of Honor, and only one has been presented the Navy Cross.

Rubio already won the Purple Heart for wounds sustained in this engagement while serving with 4th Platoon, Small Craft Company, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, U.S. Marine Forces Central Command.

According to the award's accompanying citation from the Secretary of the Navy, for the President of the United States, Rubio and members of his team were ambushed along the Euphrates River in a complex attack by a well-emplaced and determined enemy. As Rubio and an assault element swept through the ambush site, insurgents detonated an improvised explosive device. Rocket-propelled grenades, machine gun, and small arms fire

followed immediately after the explosion wounding three Marines.

Realizing the severity of the Marines' wounds, and although bleeding profusely from his own wounds, Rubio low-crawled across open terrain, exposing himself to enemy fire to provide triage. Working simultaneously on three urgent surgical casualties, Rubio coached his fellow Marines who were assisting other casualties as the volume of incoming enemy fire intensified.

After stabilizing the wounded for casualty evacuation, Rubio directed the Platoon to provide covering fire as he and several Marines began moving the casualties towards safety.

Without regard for his own life, he once again exposed himself to the heavy and accurate enemy fire moving the Marines from the ambush site to the shoreline.

Rubio is currently assigned to the NHCC Family Practice Clinic.

## CTF 76 Medical Teams Earn "Green H" Award for 3rd Consecutive Year

By Journalist 3rd Class Adam R. Cole, Task Force 76 Public Affairs

**SASEBO, Japan** - The medical departments aboard all Commander, Task Force (CTF) 76 ships earned the Commander, Naval Surface Forces (COMNAVSURFOR) Unit Wellness Green "H" Award for 2005, according to a March 30 COMNAVSURFOR message.

"I am very proud of the amazing medical teams that we have serving here as part of the Forward-Deployed Naval Force and Task Force 76," said Rear Adm. Victor G. Guillory, commander, Amphibious Force, U.S. 7th Fleet. "The fact that all of the ships earned and maintained this impressive readiness milestone is a testament to the professionalism and quality of medical care our Sailors in the medical departments provide."

Receiving the awards were USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19), USS Essex (LHD 2), USS Juneau (LPD 10), USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49), USS Fort McHenry (LSD 43), USS Patriot (MCM 7), USS Guardian (MCM 5) and USS Safeguard (ARS 50).

The awards mark the third consecutive year all eight Task Force 76 ships, part of the Forward Deployed Naval Force (FDNF), have been recognized for their outstanding achievements in promoting health within their respective commands.

This year's total Green "H" ships was lowered from last year, as only 77 were selected, as opposed to 126 last year, CTF 76 ships thus comprised 10 percent of the 2005 surface force medical awards.

The Green "H" is awarded to combined fleet medical and dental departments that take an active approach in promoting command health and wellness programs for

their Sailors. Commands are judged on criteria such as physical readiness standards and preventive health assessments, among others.

Task Force 76's group medical readiness evaluator, Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Luisito B. Deguzman, works with Task Force 76 medical teams and credits each ship's corpsmen with actively promoting higher health standards to their shipmates.

"These awards show the talent we have in the Forward-Deployed Naval Forces," said Deguzman. "The health and welfare of our Sailors is our number one concern, and the Green 'H' that will be painted on all our ships really shows our true colors."

Proactive leadership and well-managed health programs that promote healthy lifestyles, like smoking cessation and Right Spirit, directly contributed to winning the Green "H" awards, according to Deguzman.

For example, the ship's medical team aboard USS Juneau (LPD 10) completed smoking cessation activities, offered diabetes and hypertension checks, and helped promote patient education overall, in addition to other various programs.

"This was a total team effort, from the top down, where ship support for medical activities equaled a healthier crew," said Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/FMF) Gordon Dziewit, Juneau medical department's leading chief petty officer. "By having programs available and encouraging Sailors to take advantage of them has improved the health of this ship."

Task Force 76 is the Navy's only forward-deployed amphibious force, headquartered in White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa, Japan, with an operating detachment in Sasebo, Japan.

## Mercy continued...

*(Continued from page 1)*

U.S. Pacific Fleet. "By deploying the Mercy, we are training our medical crew in order to better prepare them to respond in times of disaster relief and armed conflict."

Mercy is deploying with civilian mariners, military personnel, and members of non-governmental organizations. The Mercy humanitarian mission will be led by Capt. Bradley Martin. The commanding officer of the medical treatment facility aboard is Capt. Joseph L. Moore. Civilian mariner Capt. Robert Wylie is the ship's master.

The medical crew aboard Mercy is trained to provide general surgery, ophthalmology surgery, basic medical evaluation and treatment,

preventative medicine treatment, dental screenings and treatment, optometry screenings, eyewear distribution, public health training and veterinary services.

A Seabee detachment from Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 40 from Port Hueneme, Calif., will perform civic action repair and minor construction projects in the host countries.

The Navy Showband from Norfolk, Va., will join Mercy while deployed. The band will provide outreach and entertainment to local populations where assistance work is taking place.

Last year, Mercy performed a similar mission following the December 2004 tsunami that struck Southeast Asia. Medical personnel

aboard performed 19,512 medical procedures for more than 9,500 patients in Indonesia, East Timor and Papua New Guinea.

"Many Americans are from the Asia-Pacific region, and we have strong ties to family members, friends and co-workers with roots in the region," said Roughead. "It is natural we should want to be good neighbors."

Mercy can rapidly respond to a range of situations on short notice. Mercy is uniquely capable of supporting medical and humanitarian assistance needs, and has been configured with special medical equipment and a robust multi-specialized medical team to provide a range of services ashore as well as on board the ship.



## Heroics earn Corpsman Bronze Star

By Lance Cpl. Ben P. Eberle, Camp Pendleton

**MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.** - The morning of Oct. 4, 2005 had a different feel than other mornings Company L had experienced in Iraq, said 2nd Lt. Matt J. Hendricks, Weapons Platoon commander.

Sensing the anxiety in the air, he approached Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Nathaniel R. Leoncio, serving as platoon corpsman, 4th Platoon, Company L, 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, 2nd Marine Division.

"That morning, right before we pushed off, I approached Leoncio and said, 'You're the angel on my shoulder.' He said, 'Yeah, you're mine too, sir,'" said Hendricks.

Those statements were foreshadowing of events to come, which ultimately earned Leoncio a Bronze Star Medal Friday during a ceremony at the Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton.

The mission that morning was to patrol dirt roads in unincorporated areas of southern Ar Ramadi in search of weapons and insurgent activity as part of Operation Bowie.

Their convoy was hit by multiple improvised explosive devices, the first of which disabled Leoncio's vehicle, killing the driver and severely injuring three others including him.

First Lt. Bradley R. Watson, executive officer for Company L,

pulled Leoncio from the wreckage while Leoncio instructed him how to apply a tourniquet to his severely injured right leg.

Leoncio, also sustained a shattered femur and severe internal bleeding from the blast.

"To have the medical awareness to know how to treat his wound, for corpsmen, 12 trucks, six trucks, three trucks back from the explosion, that's outstanding. To be in the vehicle that's hit, that's amazing," said Capt. Rory B. Quinn, commander of Company L. "Doc Leoncio is an inspiration to Lima Company."

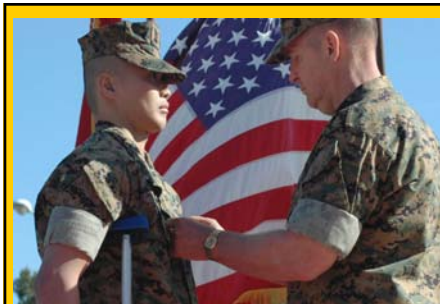
After helping Marines treat his own wounds, Leoncio turned his attention to Hendricks, his platoon commander, who was bleeding profusely.

He winced as he rolled onto his injured right leg to reach for the field dressing in his left cargo pocket, but he successfully stopped the bleeding, according to Quinn.

Leoncio's right leg had to be amputated, and he went through the initial stages of his recovery at the National Naval Medical Center, also known as Bethesda Naval Hospital.

"It was amazing to see him," said Lindsay S. Chavez, his sister. "He doesn't let anyone feel sorry for him, and he tries to make everyone comfortable."

"He hasn't ever looked back on



**CAMP PENDLETON** - Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Nathaniel Leoncio, receives a Bronze Star Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device from Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler, Commanding General, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force during a ceremony at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, Calif., April 6. *U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Joseph Rawson*

what happened and regretted it," she added.

"He's always been a get-down-to-business kind of guy," said Hospital Corpsman Chris C. Webster, with 1st Marine Logistics Group. "It paid off out there."

"All evil needs to succeed is for people to stand by and do nothing," said Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler, Commanding General for the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, before pinning Leoncio's Bronze Star Medal. "I think everyone will agree with me, as we're here with this warrior, that evil is going to have a tough time."

As Leoncio looks towards his future, the outlook is bright. "I'm going to go back and finish school," he said. "I'll probably do something with medicine."



**AGANA HEIGHTS, Guam** - Lt. Junius Dural and Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Mary A. Rhudy discuss a patient's X-rays in the Emergency Room at Naval Hospital Guam. Dural is a Family Nurse Practitioner and Rhudy, works as a general duty corpsman. *U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 2nd Class Nathanael T. Miller*

## Navy Surgeon General Visits Naval Medical Center San Diego

By Photographer's Mate John Ciccarelli, Fleet Public Affairs Center, Pacific

**SAN DIEGO** - Vice Adm. Donald C. Arthur, U.S. Navy Surgeon General, visited Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS D) April 17 to view the upcoming Comprehensive Combat Casualty Care Center (5C) and learn more about future family care projects at the hospital.

Arthur toured the forthcoming 5C, speaking with patients and medical personnel about their particular department of care.

With the opening of the 5C later this summer, seriously wounded patients from the West Coast will no longer have to go to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., or Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio to receive follow-on care, a huge benefit for wounded military personnel and their families.

"We already do a good job here at the hospital of including the family in as much as we can," said Cmdr. Kathy Goldberg, department head of the physical and occupational therapy department. "With the C5 center, the family must be involved from the beginning. They may be involved in things they haven't done in the past, such as helping with wound care, rehabilitation and helping with adjustment issues of both the patient and other family members."

NMCS D officials said some families have tried to relocate closer to Walter Reed and Brooke, but that adds stress and financial burden to the trauma of having an injured family member. When the 5C is completed, injured troops from West Coast units will be able to be flown directly to San Diego to receive follow-on medical care.

"It is absolutely a streamlined approach to Navy medicine," said Lt. Richard Pozniak, critical care staff nurse. "With this approach, military families have the option to stay closer to home while still being close to their medical needs."

At lunch, Arthur spoke with and thanked combat-injured Marines and sought their views on the treatment they've received. He also commended the medical staff on their continuous efforts supporting injured warfighters and their families.

"The facilities are wonderful, and they have exactly the right mission frame," said Arthur. "This is one of the best medical centers in the entire world, and they have the right mindset, because they know that each one of their patients are family members."

NMCS D is also expanding and adding other programs to make hospital stays more comfortable for military patients and their families.

## Naval Medical Center San Diego Unit Recognized by National Magazine

By Photographer's Mate Airman Damien E. Horvath, Fleet Public Affairs Center, Pacific

**SAN DIEGO** - A unit at Naval Medical Center San Diego has been recognized by the nation's largest health care publication, Advance for Nurses magazine, in the 'best team'

category for 2006.

Thirty nurses and corpsmen from the hospital's Five East Hematology/Oncology Unit were presented a plaque April 12 by Advance Magazine regional editor Luke Cowles.

"A panel of leading military and civilian nurses from around the country selected this unit out of thousands because of exceptional performance as a group," said Cowles.

Clinical Nursing Specialist Lt. Cmdr. Carma Erickson-Hunt nominated the unit for the award.

"These individuals always go above and beyond the call of duty, not only in general patient care, but anything they can do to make a difference," said Erickson-Hunt.

According to Capt. Jennifer Town, director of nursing and senior

executive nurse, the award recognizes the quality work and care of everyone at the hospital.

"I think it is just testimony to the power of teamwork and is testimony to our staff here at San Diego. It really pulls together everyone from housekeeping to the nurses to corpsmen. We are all here to take care of our patients, and it's just a recognition of what teamwork can do and produce."

The unit is the primary care providers for the hospital's terminally ill cancer patients.

"We serve as a support system for the patients and other medical staff members. We can count on each other for just about anything. We are like a family," said Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Trista Peterson, a member of the unit for almost three years.



Bureau of Medicine and Surgery  
2300 E Street NW  
Washington, DC 20372-5300

Public Affairs Office  
Phone: 202-762-3221  
Fax: 202-762-1705